



Postpartum mental health after Hurricane Katrina: A cohort study

Author(s): Harville EW, Xiong X, Pridjian G, Elkind-Hirsch K, Buekens P
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Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Natural disaster is often a cause of psychopathology, and women are vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. Depression is also common after a woman gives birth. However, no research has addressed postpartum women's mental health after natural disaster. **METHODS:** Interviews were conducted in 2006-2007 with women who had been pregnant during or shortly after Hurricane Katrina. 292 New Orleans and Baton Rouge women were interviewed at delivery and 2 months postpartum. Depression was assessed using the Edinburgh Depression Scale and PTSD using the Post-Traumatic Stress Checklist. Women were asked about their experience of the hurricane with questions addressing threat, illness, loss, and damage. Chi-square tests and log-binomial/Poisson models were used to calculate associations and relative risks (RR). **RESULTS:** Black women and women with less education were more likely to have had a serious experience of the hurricane. 18% of the sample met the criteria for depression and 13% for PTSD at two months postpartum. Feeling that one's life was in danger was associated with depression and PTSD, as were injury to a family member and severe impact on property. Overall, two or more severe experiences of the storm was associated with an increased risk for both depression (relative risk (RR) 1.77, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.08-2.89) and PTSD (RR 3.68, 95% CI 1.80-7.52). **CONCLUSION:** Postpartum women who experience natural disaster severely are at increased risk for mental health problems, but overall rates of depression and PTSD do not seem to be higher than in studies of the general population.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2702337>

Resource Description

Communication: ☒

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience: ☒

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Extreme Weather Event, Human Conflict/Displacement

Extreme Weather Event: Hurricanes/Cyclones

Geographic Feature: 

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

Geographic Location: 

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact: 

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Mental Health/Stress

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Stress Disorder

Medical Community Engagement: 

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation: 

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: 

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children, Low Socioeconomic Status, Pregnant Women, Racial/Ethnic Subgroup

Other Racial/Ethnic Subgroup: Black

Other Vulnerable Population: Women

Resource Type: 

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Resilience: 

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment: ☒

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content